

**STATEMENT OF DURAND JONES, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE,
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS,
RECREATION AND PUBLIC LANDS OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES
CONCERNING H.R. 3307, A BILL TO AUTHORIZE THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO
ACQUIRE THE PROPERTY KNOWN AS PEMBERTON'S HEADQUARTERS AND TO MODIFY
THE BOUNDARY OF VICKSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK TO INCLUDE THAT
PROPERTY**

APRIL 11, 2002

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior's views on H.R. 3307, which would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to acquire the property known as Pemberton's Headquarters and to modify the boundary of Vicksburg National Military Park to include that property.

The Department supports H.R. 3307. Pemberton's Headquarters is a nationally significant resource that is well-suited for use as a visitor site, and its inclusion in Vicksburg National Military Park would enable the National Park Service to add an important dimension to the interpretation of Civil War and post-Civil War events in the Vicksburg area. The addition of Pemberton's Headquarters would entail acquisition, preservation, and operating costs that are described later in this testimony.

Pemberton's Headquarters is the building that Confederate Lt. General John C. Pemberton occupied during the siege of the city of Vicksburg led by Union Major General Ulysses S. Grant from May 19 to July 4, 1863. It was in this building that Pemberton held a council of his chief officers on July 3, 1863 to discuss plans for surrender of the city, which occurred the following day. The campaign for Vicksburg is considered by many military historians to have been the most critical campaign of the Civil War, as it severed the Confederacy geographically and cut vital supply lines to the Confederate states and thus was pivotal in bringing about the Confederacy's defeat.

The national significance of Pemberton's Headquarters was recognized through its designation as a National Historic Landmark in 1976. The building, which was constructed from 1834-1836, is located in Vicksburg's historic district. It is adjacent to Balfour House, which served as the headquarters for the Union

occupation forces following the surrender and is open to the public. And, it is four blocks from the historic Warren County Courthouse, where the military administration of the occupied city was conducted through Reconstruction. A visitor site at this location would give the National Park Service the opportunity not only to expand its interpretation of the siege of Vicksburg, but also to interpret historical events in the years immediately following the Union victory there. It would help the service fulfill legislation passed by Congress in 1990 calling on the park to “interpret the campaign and siege of Vicksburg from April 1862 to July 4, 1863, and the history of Vicksburg under Union Occupation during the Civil War and Reconstruction.”

Acquisition of Pemberton Headquarters for inclusion in Vicksburg National Military Park would also fulfill the vision of the Union and Confederate veterans who, in 1895, petitioned Congress to establish a national military park at Vicksburg similar to those previously established at Chickamauga and Chattanooga, Antietam, Shiloh, and Gettysburg. Those veterans recommended that the headquarters of both Union and Confederate commanders be included in the park. However, while the site of Grant’s headquarters was included in the park, that of Pemberton’s was not due to the objections of the then-owner of the property. The current owner, who has used the building for a bed-and-breakfast in recent years, would now like to sell the property to the National Park Service so that its place in history will be secure.

As you know, the Department is committed to the President’s priority of eliminating the National Park Service’s deferred maintenance backlog and is concerned about the development and life-cycle operational costs associated with expansion of parks already included in the National Park System. With that in mind, we have some concerns about the ability of the National Park Service to assume the costs of acquiring, preserving, and operating the Pemberton Headquarters property within current budget constraints.

The National Park Service does not yet have an appraisal of the property, but the agency’s land acquisition experts believe that it may cost around \$600,000 to acquire. The Service also does not have an estimate of

the cost of preserving the building and the grounds and making the site accessible to visitors. Stabilizing the building alone would cost an estimated \$228,000, but the cost of more extensive preservation would need to be determined through studies. Those studies would cost an estimated \$191,000. The Service has made a preliminary estimate that the cost of operating and maintaining the site would be approximately \$425,000 annually, but actual costs would depend on a number of unknown factors, including the extent of preservation done on the site.

H.R. 3307 includes language that would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to acquire less than one acre in the environs of Pemberton's Headquarters to use for off-street parking, as well as related visitor or administrative facilities. This is a provision that was recommended by the Department in testimony before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee last year, as no off-street parking currently exists at the site. This would increase acquisition, development, and operational costs of the site.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or other members of the Subcommittee may have.